

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 20, 21, 24, and 27 have been amended herein. Claims 32-34 have been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claims 1-19 (canceled).

20. (Currently Amended) A process for the production of a cable having at least one covering layer consisting of a composition comprising at least one polymeric material and a mineral filler in a quantity greater than 30% by weight relative to the total weight of the composition, said cable being produced by using an extruder comprising a cylindrical casing, at least one extrusion screw of preset pitch positioned within said casing and having an axis of rotation parallel to the axis of said cylinder, a charging hopper located at a first end of said casing, a filtration section located close to the head of said screw, and positioned perpendicular to the axis of said screw, a connecting flange positioned downstream from the filtration section, and an extrusion head comprising a conveyer element and a die communicating with the exterior, so as to define a second end of said casing, said process comprising the steps of:

a) conveying at least one conducting element inside of said extruder;

b) feeding the polymeric material and the mineral filler, optionally

premixed with other components of said composition, into said extruder via said charging hopper;

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c) filtering said composition transferred and plasticized by said extrusion screw; and

d) depositing said composition onto said at least one conducting element; whereby the filtration operation is performed by using a filter support plate comprising an internal surface and a plurality of elements, which protrude therefrom and define defining a plurality of sectors between and within which the filtered composition flows.

21. (Currently Amended) A process according to Claim 20, wherein said filter support plate is positioned downstream of said extrusion screws. **[[.]]**

22. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 20, wherein the filtration efficiency (E) is greater than 0.8.

23. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 22, wherein the filtration efficiency (E) is greater than 0.9.

24. (Currently Amended) A process according to Claim 20, wherein said composition has a Melt Flow Index lower than 15 g/10 min, wherein said Melt Flow Index is **[[()]]** measured as per the standard ASTM 1238, with a capillary of diameter 2 mm, using a weight of 21 kg and heating the composition to a temperature of 240°C **[[()]]**.

25. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 20, wherein said mineral filter quantity lies between 50% and 80% by weight relative to the total weight of the composition.

26. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 20, wherein said mineral filler is a fire resistant filler.

27. (Currently Amended) A process according to Claim 20, wherein the cable obtained at the exit from said extruder is conveyed to at least one cooling unit. [[.]]

28. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 20, wherein the cable obtained at the exit from said extruder is conveyed to at least one crosslinking unit.

29. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 20, wherein said at least one conducting element is subjected to a constant pull by a system of pulleys, gears, or pulleys and gears.

30. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 29, wherein the speed of said pull lies between 600 and 1500 m/min.

31. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 20, wherein downstream from said at least one cooling unit, said cable is subjected to a drying stage.

32. (Withdrawn) An apparatus for the production of a cable having at least one covering layer consisting of a composition comprising at least one polymeric material and a mineral filler in a quantity greater than 30% by weight relative to the total weight of the composition, said apparatus comprising:

at least one charging hopper for feeding the polymeric material and said mineral filler, optionally premixed together or with other components of said composition;

at least one extruder comprising an extrusion screw and an extrusion head inside of which is contained a die for the purpose of fitting said covering layer around at least one conducting element of said cable;

at least one device for unwinding said conducting element; and

at least one device for winding said cable, wherein the filtration section of said extruder has a filter support plate defining a plurality of sectors within which the filtered composition flows.

33. (Withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 32, further comprising one or more units for cooling said cable.

34. (Withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 32, further comprising one or more units for crosslinking before said one or more cooling units.